THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CH. VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) and (b) The Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) in its memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister on 5.11.1999 had *inter-alia* drawn attention to the influx of a large number of Muslims from Kargil and Kashmir into the Ladakh region with a view to change the demographic complexion of the region.

According to a communication from the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, the Buddhists of Leh are voicing their demand for stopping the alleged conversion of Buddhist girls to Islam. The matter actually owes its origin to the instances of marriages contracted by Buddhist girls with Muslim boys on two occasions in the recent past. No coercion has been used and the parties have entered into the marriage on their own free will. In one case the girl has been restored back to her parents. The local administration is seized of the matter and necessary steps being taken to keep a close watch on the situation.

Terrorist Groups in Assam

1422. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the terrorist groups like DHD, KNV-KPF, PRIPO etc. operating in the district of North Cachar hills and Karbi Anglong in Assam creating fear and tensions in the minds of the masses; if so, the details of effective measures being taken by Government to tackle the problem; and

(b) whether Government have initiated the process of peaceful solution through negotiations with these outfits operating in the area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) Government are aware of the criminal activities of groups like DHD, KNV-KPF, etc. in the North Cachar Hills and Karbi Anglong Districts. Government have taken various steps to check criminal activities of these groups. These include deployment of Para-Military Forces, coordinated action by Army, Para-Military Forces and State Police in these districts.

(b) Yes, Sir. The Government of India has made several appeals to all such groups to come forward for unconditional talks.